

The following questions received regarding the draft START III solicitation required further clarification from EPA or were received after the comment period. These questions are a follow-on to the list that was posted on 9/27/04.

Question 11:

B-3 of 8 (d) Just a thought -The timing of the publication of the applicable indices could impact this clause.

Answer:

Global Insights (Formerly DRI) is released quarterly, EPA will use the most current release.

Question 31:

A clause in the "B" Section of the solicitation makes reference is made to the OSC consulting with a "Response Manager" relative to conditions for terminating site operations. Please define the position of the "Response Manager". It is recommended that the START Site Project Manager also be included in the meeting in order to make certain START is correctly represented and to ensure there are no gaps in the communications as related to the project and/or the START contract.

Answer:

The reference to the Response Manager has been removed. The OSC determines if site operations are terminated in accordance with terms and conditions of the applicable contract.

Question 35:

E.1 Higher Level Contract Quality Requirement

E.1.A. Pre-Award Documentation

Quality Management Plan (QMP) is checked that the offeror must submit the QMP as a "separate and identifiable part of its technical proposal", but it is not specifically mentioned in Attachment 13 Instructions for Preparation of Technical and Cost Proposal, nor in Attachment 14 Technical Evaluation Criteria. Is the QMP a required submittal with the proposal? If the QMP is required, where should it be placed in the proposal? Also, what is meant by "separate and identifiable" document? Is a tabbed appendix acceptable or should it be submitted as a separately bound volume?

Answer:

A QMP should be submitted with the proposal and may be placed under a separate tab in the technical proposal and will be evaluated in accordance with sections "L" and "M" of the solicitation. In accordance with the clause in section C of the solicitation, the resulting Quality

Management Plan will be incorporated in the contract.

Question 49:

H.13 Treatment of Confidential Business Information

Neither the Instructions to Bidder nor the Evaluation Criteria reference submission of a CBI Plan. Is the CBI Plan required as part of the proposal and if so, where should it be included?

Answer:

As of now there is no requirement for a CBI plan, however this requirement may be added. If a CBI plan is included, it will be added to section “L” of the solicitation in a provision entitled “Submission of Contractor Plans”, and to section “M” in a provision entitled “Evaluation of Standard Operating Procedures”.

Question 51:

H.38 Sample Collection, Data Management, Review, Tracking and Reporting Requirements

3. (c): Is the ADR software currently finalized and available to be downloaded, and if so where can it be found. Similarly, is the SEDD format finalized, and if not, when is it expected to be finalized and available for contractor review?

Answer:

1. The ADR Software is finalized and is available through EPA. It is a CD (not downloadable).
2. The SEDD format will be finalized early next year and the draft SEDD documents are already ready for contractor review at the SEDD website:
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/clp/sedd.htm>

Question 57:

If RCMS is used to track costs in the field, it is assumed that some costs will have to be estimated (such as actual rental car rates, hotel rates, etc.). Is it acceptable that the actual amounts billed may not match exactly what was entered into RCMS? Additionally, it is assumed that these costs will be entered into RCMS the day that they are incurred. However, timing issues may prevent an employee from submitting a personal expense report for these expenses prior to the preparation of the monthly invoice. Similar concerns exist for committed costs such as pool/field subcontractors including drillers, analytical laboratories, etc. For example, if a driller conducted drilling operations at the site on the 30th of the month, and these costs were entered into RCMS; the driller will not submit an invoice until sometime the subsequent month, and this driller cost cannot be invoiced to EPA until the driller has been paid. Thus, there could potentially be a two month or more timing issue. Thus, costs reported on RCMS will not match those invoiced. Is this acceptable? If not, how should it be resolved? Similarly, there could be

expenses not anticipated when information is entered into RCMS daily (such as costs incurred during demobilization), or potential specialized labor or expenses. How will this information be entered into RCMS so that it can subsequently be billed? Additionally, the RFP states that RCMS is mandatory to prepare and submit EPA Form 1900-55, daily cost summary reports during performance under this contract. What areas of the PWS are expected for daily cost tracking under the contract?

Answer:

RCMS should not be used for invoicing. There will be differences between RCMS and actual invoices due to the estimates in RCMS. The contractor should however, be able to reconcile RCMS to invoices to explain any differences. RCMS should be used to track all daily costs associated with a site, as specified in the RCMS clause contained in section "H" of the solicitation. In addition, the clause entitled "Invoicing Requirements" contained in section "G" of the solicitation, allows a prime contractor to bill for incurred costs that have not been actually paid. Offerors are encouraged to read all invoicing clauses and attachments identified in the solicitation.

Question 70:

Reference PWS, Attachment 1, Exhibit D: Put an * next to "2-way radio communications (intrinsically safe)" for LEVELs A, B & C. The comment that it * refers to is the following: "Hot Zone Radio as specified at the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/oamsrpod/erc/bpa/crosswalk.pdf>. This requirement is subject to change during the term of the contract." This is subject to change because EPA may change its equipment in which case the contractor will have to in order to ensure compatibility during a response. (John can correct me if I have explained this adequately.)

Answer:

Contractors should provide emergency response equipment consistent with the equipment crosswalk, listed at <http://www.epa.gov/oamsrpod/erc/bpa/crosswalk.pdf>. This list will be amended to reflect the most current equipment required for each response level.

Question 72:

II Technical Requirements, A. Response Activities, 4. Federal Disaster Response

What type of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training is required to perform damage assessment as described in the last sentence of this section?

Answer:

The contractor shall provide technical support to EPA in conjunction with other federal, state or local agencies in the planning and preparedness for natural and man-made disaster response under the FRP or other federally adopted national response plans; provide technical support to

EPA in performing Federal Disaster Assistance surveys of damage caused by disasters or assessment of damages to public water or sewage treatment facilities or related environmental problems; and have response personnel trained *in EPA CERCLA assessment procedures which support Federal Emergency Management Agency mission assignments to EPA's for disaster response actions.*

Question 76:

D. Incident Command System (ICS) Report

Where are the training requirements specified in the PWS (Attachment 1)? What section of the PWS presents the training requirements? What are the training requirements?

Answer:

Training requirements are addressed in Response and Key Personnel Qualifications (Attachment H-3). The minimum level of ICS training the Government requires is ICS 200. Please note, this is the minimum and there may be situations where higher level training may be required.

Question 83:

1. On page 10-4, under #1 of the General CORE readiness Team Proficiency requirements, the typical areas of "division/group supervisor, strike team leaders" should be deleted, it is too confusing.
2. On page 10-5, Should the Core Readiness Team Leaders include data management, SCRIBE, RCMS and ICS 200, 300, 400 version?
3. On page 10-6, Should the Readiness Coordinator Requirements include familiarity with ICS?
4. page 10-7, Industrial Hygienist, should it include Cameo or other dispersion models?

Answer:

1. The terms "division/group supervisor, strike team leaders" are positions within the ICS system. These are ICS terms for positions that START personnel would typically fill within the Operations Section, although START would use different terminology (ie. project manager, team leader). START personnel should become familiar with using ICS terminology and become proficient with the responsibilities and administrative functions required by each position. The bottom line is that START should be familiar enough with ICS to recognize the positions they would fill based on the Scope of Work in the START contract. EPA's implementation of ICS will not fundamentally change the work on our sites, just some of our terminology and site documentation practices.

2. SCRIBE and RCMS can be processed by administrative personnel and not necessarily managers or Team Leaders. This is a competitive Performance-Based-Service-Acquisition.

Each contractor will propose how they intend to comply with the requirements and be evaluated on the basis of best-value to the Government. ICS 200, 300 and 400 are levels of training and not data management elements. ICS 200 is the minimum level of ICS training that is required. For additional information, please review Attachment H-3 of the solicitation.

3. Yes, ICS 200 is the required minimum level of ICS training. See Attachment H-3 of the solicitation for additional information related to ICS training.

4. START should have a wide range of data management personnel on staff. There should be highly technical personnel functioning as database managers, data security personnel, GIS experts, chemist with analytical and data validation and other more administrative personnel that can perform data entry.

Question 92:

Since this has the potential to be at least a 7 year and now maybe a 10 year contract, we should consider including the annual closeout requirement (this is in our 10 year RAC contracts) for this procurement.

Answer:

Yes, annual closeout requirement will be included in the solicitation.

Question 93:

On ICS...

It was suggested that the following issues regarding ICS be addressed in the solicitation.

Contractor training, qualification and use of ICS, ICS terminology, ICS processes and systems. The potential for non-OSCs directing contractors working in ICS groups or divisions under the supervision of another local, state or federal agency's Operations Section Chief or group/division Supervisors, formation of contractor Strike Teams or Strike Forces in the Operations Section, replacing the use of Daily Work Orders with Incident Action Plans to provide direction and scope of work for the contractor, dispersing contractor personnel throughout the ICS structure (contractor admin. moving to the Finance/Administration Section, logistics person moving to the Logistics Section, Removal Manager working in the Operations Section, safety person working for the Safety Officer, etc.).

Answer:

ICS 200 is the minimum level of ICS training required as stated in the solicitation in accordance with Response and Key Personnel Qualifications (Attachment H-3). Contractor personnel shall support EPA authorized personnel fulfilling ICS command and general staff positions. Daily work orders and Incident Action plans are synonymous.

Question 97:

Attachment 9 - Response and Key Personnel Qualifications, General Contract Key Personnel Qualifications, Toxicologist/Risk Assessor: The proposed position requirement for this key person is to conduct both human health and ecological risk assessments. In practice, a Board Certified Toxicologist focus is on the human health risk assessment only. The ecological risk assessment is typically performed by another person skilled in this subject area. How does EPA suggest that an offeror respond to this requirement considering the similar, but different practices. Should this position be split into two positions (human health risk assessor and ecological risk assessor) that fit the typical approach for conducting these risk assessments? Please advise.

Answer:

This position requirement will not be split into two positions, however more than one person may be proposed for the position of Toxicologist/Risk Assessor.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE COMMENT PERIOD CLOSED**Question 99:**

Clarification is needed regarding the equipment that will be available to the Start team. What equipment will need to be provided by the contractor? What Government owned equipment will be available to the Start team from the local EPA warehouse? What, if any, government furnished equipment will be provided to the Start team, i.e. vehicles, mobile command posts, response platforms mobile decon units, etc.?

Answer:

The specific, or what property/equipment an offeror/contractor is encouraged to own and be familiar with in order to support an OSC in operating government owned property, will be identified in Attachment B-1 of the solicitation.

If GFP is applicable, it will be identified in the solicitation at Attachment B-1, (Note, the Government anticipates there will be little to no GFP provided).

Equipment the offeror/contractor is required to own, as reflected in the offeror's/contractor's fixed labor rates, is identified in Attachment B-1 of the solicitation.

Question 100:

In clause B.1 regarding standby time, it is assumed that the government will pay for the contractor to demobilize from the site and then remobilize to the site when work resumes. Is this correct? Also, who is the response manager referenced in the clause?

Answer:

Mobilization/demobilization from a site would cause the contractor to incur travel and equipment costs. The travel portion of these costs is a reimbursable cost, the equipment portion of these costs will either be included in the fixed rate, or will be a reimbursable cost depending on whether it is routine or non-routine equipment. The reference to the response manager has been taken out of this clause.

Question 101:

Will the government provide an estimate of the annual LOE for the contract in order for the contractor to base its program support requirements/costs that need to be factored into the labor rates?

Answer:

The annual estimate for LOE is 110,000 hours. This estimate is based on historical usage, however, this is not intended to be an LOE contract.

Question 102:

Specialized labor is the product that consulting companies provide to government and private sector clients as a matter of business. As such, we would expect to be able to recover our costs and a fee for the work of these labor categories in order to be responsive to our stockholders. Treating specialized labor as if it were a commodity like travel and rental of equipment or supplies is a disincentive to the contractor to provide this labor to the government. Will the government reconsider this position?

Answer:

When developing the fixed rate, profit for items such as specialized labor should be factored in to the rate. At this time the government will not reconsider this position.

Question 103:

What is meant by the term “productive man-year team” in the clause entitled “Productive man Year”?

Answer:

Language changed to: Specialized Labor includes but is not limited to the following professional specialists not available for day to day operations.

Question 104:

The Incident Command System (ICS) report needs clarification. What does " report should include all efforts made by the contractor to maintain the training requirements as specified in the PWS" mean? The PWS doesn't specify training START members will have or maintain,

however Attachment 9 page 9-3 states ICS level 300 training is required and page 9-6 references ICS level 200 training. Is this the training meant for the ICS report?

Answer:

The report has been changed to say training requirements as specified in the Response and Key Personnel Qualifications (Attachment H-3), in addition ICS 200 is the minimum level of required ICS training.

Question 105:

Since the contractor has no control of the CPI or DRI, the limitations in Clause G.2 Economic Price Adjustment place an unreasonable risk on the contractor and in effect are asking the contractor to insure the government. The use of the CPI or DRI to adjust the labor or material costs on an annual basis is reasonable without these limitations. Will the government reconsider these limitations?

Answer:

The limitation has been raised to 50% aggregate increase. This limitation may differ from region to region, it was calculated on a basis of a 5% per year increase.

Question 106:

How are START sites identified?

Answer:

Sites are identified many ways, but primarily from state and local government referral, or by a citizen.

Question 107:

Are START investigation conducted on only sites listed in the CERCLIS database?

Answer:

START contractors are used to conduct assessments for possible NPL listing and/or Removal Action.

Question 108:

Are they conducted before the site is listed in CERCLIS??

Answer:

Once a site is identified as needing investigation, it is entered into CERCLIS, however, for emergency sites, this might not be accomplished prior to the assessment.

Question 109:

Is there a database for sites that need START investigations, and how can I access this database, if available??

Answer:

There is no other database for these sites.

Question 110:

How are PRPs notified of their site's inclusion in the START program?

Answer:

PRP identification is generally part of the assessment process, with EPA using the information to notify PRPs.